

New perspectives for rethinking climate change from
grassroots social innovation.

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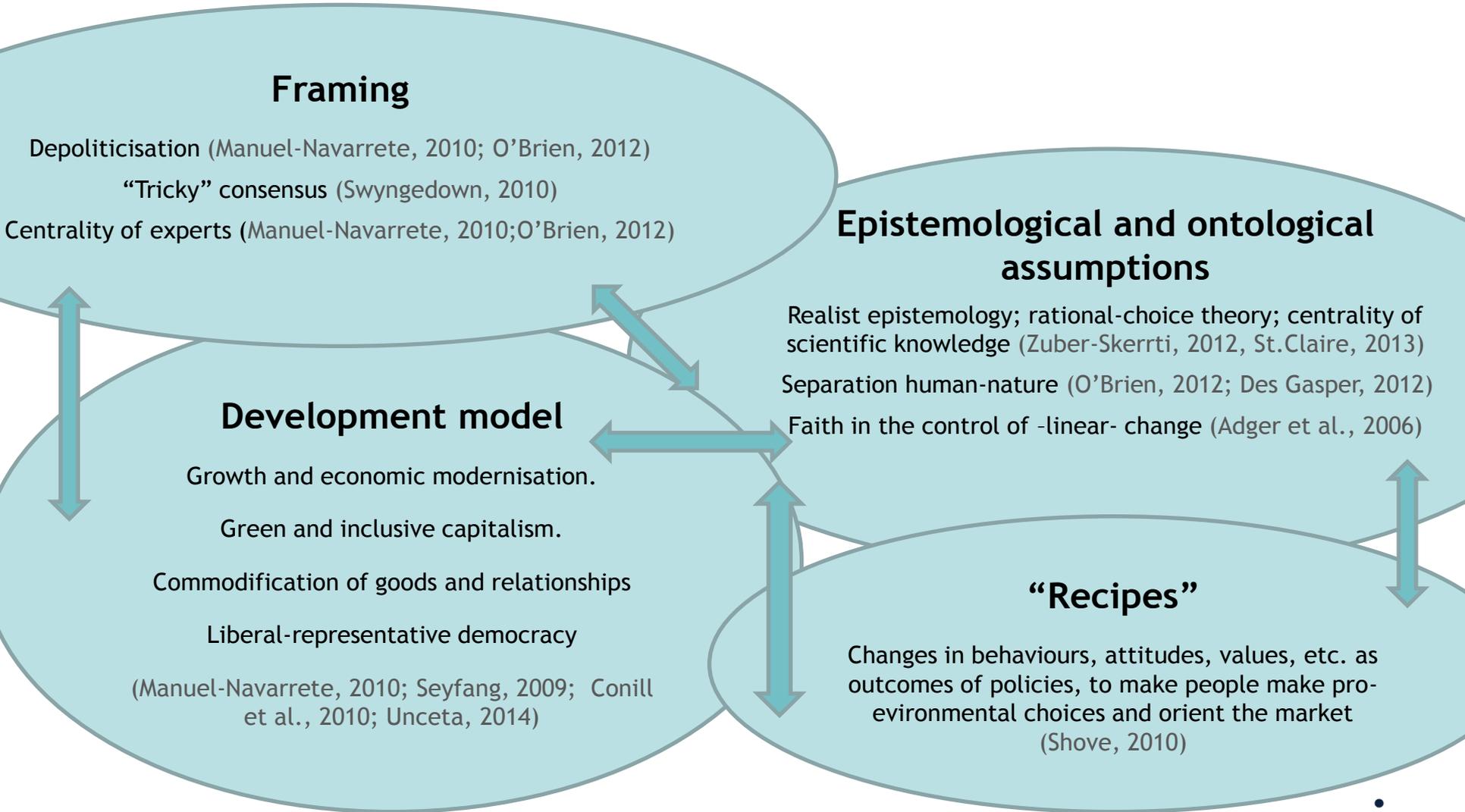


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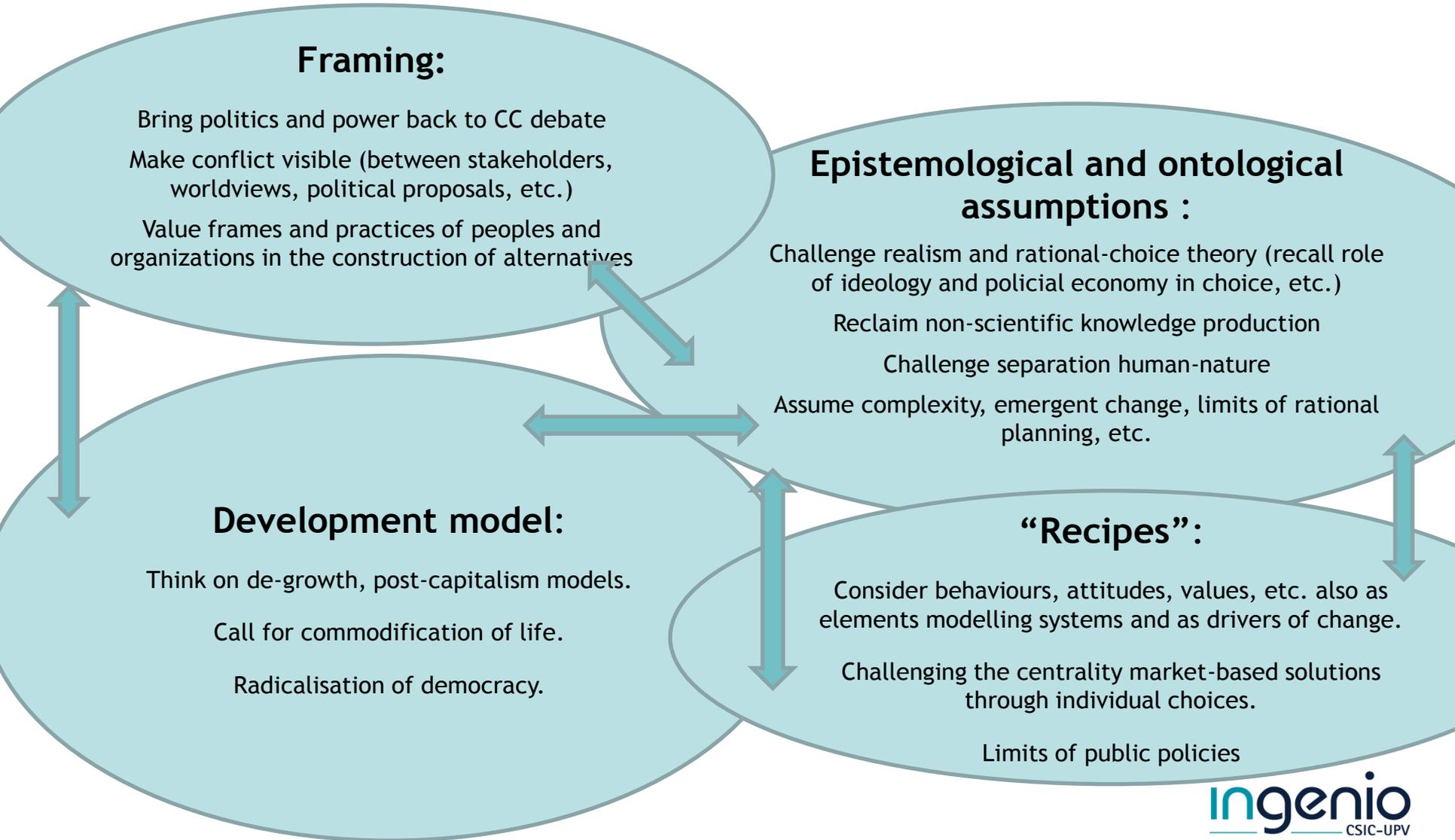
1. Need for rethinking current approach

“Constellation” of connected entry-points and criticisms to limitations of dominant CC discourses and practices. Overlappings and complementarities between them.



1. Need for rethinking current approach

These criticisms have led to key questions for rethinking CC discourses and practices.



2. Our issue of study



From these ideas, authors have specifically pointed to the importance of...

...moving the site of interest for research (spaces moving beyond market logics, mainstream policies, etc), to places where alternatives are built.

For example, addressing discourses and practices regarding CC emerging at **grassroots and community level**, were «new framings emerge, (...) alternative ways of production of knowledge, alternative practices which respond to environmental change» (O'Brien et al., 2012:12).

...considering alternatives which may be addressing structural change (political-economy issues).

For example, grassroots level **social economy practices of production and consumption of goods and services**, where socio-economic structures and development models are challenged, and new ones created, «new infrastructures for production and consumption, outside market rules» (Smith, 2007).

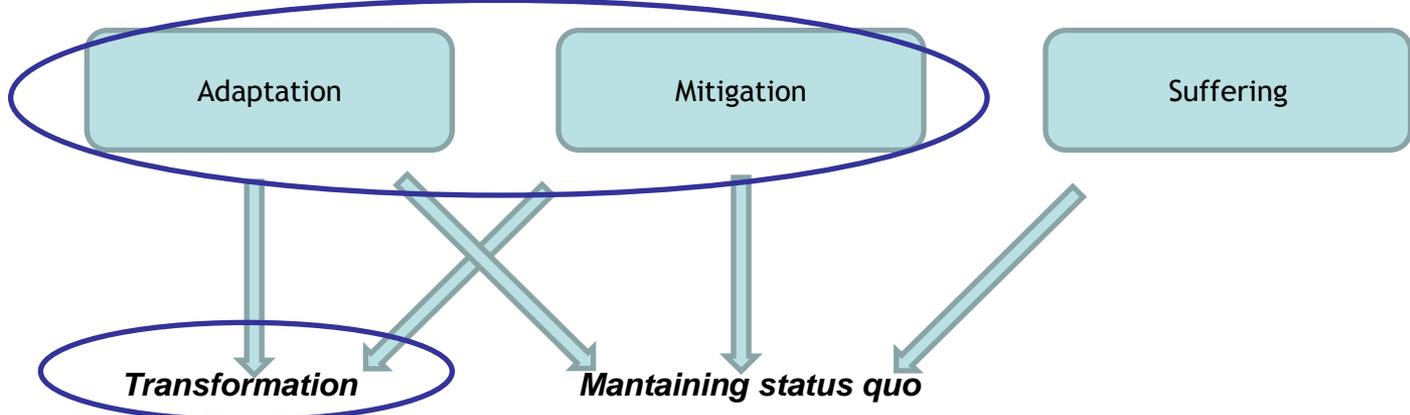
These kind of experiences have been understudied from the point of view of their contribution for confronting CC (Scott-Cato and Hiller, 2010).

→ Alternative discourses and practices relevant for a transformative response to CC, emerging in grassroots driven alternatives of production and distribution of goods and services

3. Field of study

Literature on transformation and transformative responses to global environmental change.

Moving beyond/complement classic «choices» front of climate change (Kolbert, 2009):



Transformation is a debate were different ideas, notions, etc. coexist.

We draw on complementary ideas of different authors (O'Brien and Sygna, 2012; O'Brien, 2012), to define...

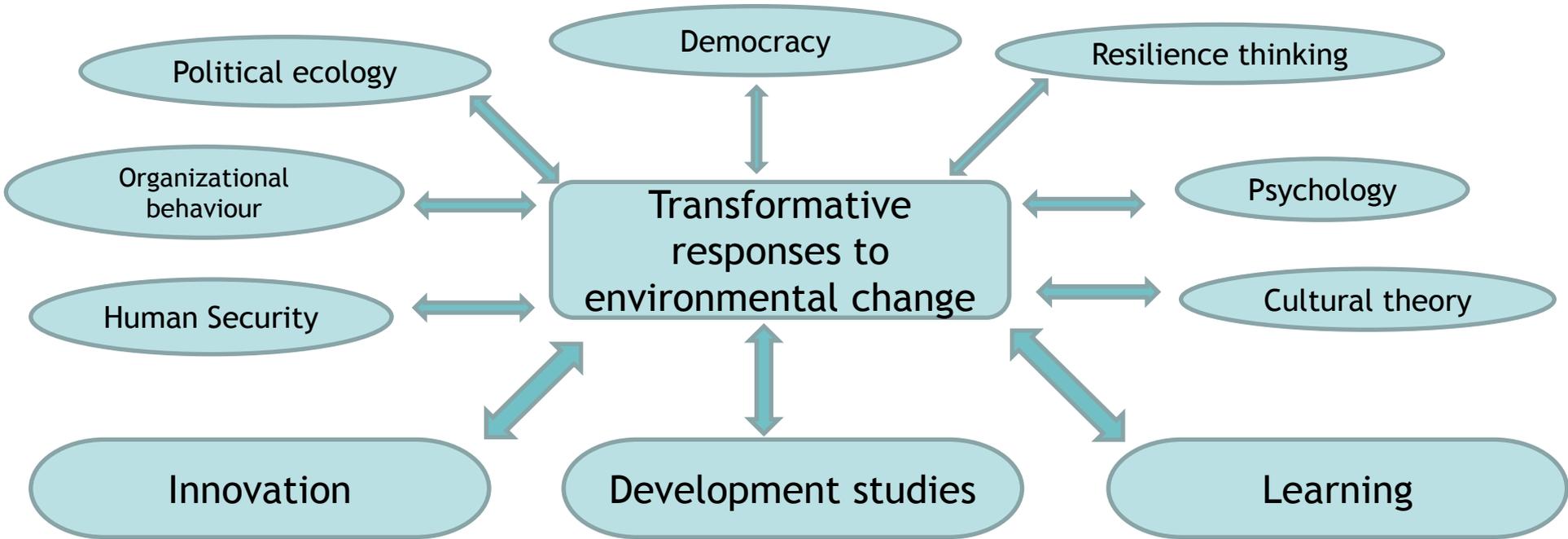
...**What is transformation?** The **altering of fundamental attributes of a system**, including value systems, regulatory, legislative and bureaucratic regimes, technological or biological systems (IPCC, 2012), but also political, economic and social structures (Manuel-Navarrete, 2010).

...**Who runs transformations?** Deliberate transformations are often **initiated by small groups of committed individuals** operating in the shadow (Pelling et al., 2008, in O'Brien, 2012).

...**What is transformed?** Transformations may occur in **multiple dimensions and scales**, in different contexts and setting. Include transformations of **systems of provision** -energy and agricultural, financial, transport etc.-; governance regimes; development paradigms; power and gender relations; production and consumption patterns; lifestyles; knowledge production systems, values and world-views, etc. (O'Brien, 2012). They occur at the practical, political and personal sphere (O'Brien and Sygna, 2013)

3. Field of study

Many disciplines, theories and approaches have provided insights on transformative responses to global environmental change (Bhaaskar et al., 2010).



- Approach new frames, procedures, values, etc., considered as outcomes of *innovations*.
- Understand and characterize *socio-technical regimes* and landscapes; *niches* where alternatives are built.

- Provide normative and evaluative frameworks to approach innovation and learning processes

- Approach individual and collective processes of transformative learning-leading to new knowledge, frames, skills, attitudes, values, etc.

We consider and connect different literatures and approaches within each discipline

4. Building a theoretical framework

Innovation



Social innovation



Grassroots social innovation

- Refers to **innovative activities and services** that are motivated by the goal of **meeting social needs** and that are predominantly diffused through organizations whose primary purposes are social (Mulgan et al., 2007: 8)

- Describe **networks of activists and organizations** generating novel bottom-up solutions for sustainable development and consumption. Respond to the local situations and to the interests and values of the communities involved.

- In contrast to mainstream business greening, they operate in **civil society** arenas (no market logic).

- Develop **new conceptualizations, organizational arrangements, relationships and tools** for sustainable development.

- They are **niches of innovation**. Can go into the dominant **socio-technical regime**.

- Develop **alternative provision systems** -infrastructures of consumption --> new institutions and socio-technical infrastructures for a more sustainable production and consumption.

- Examples: Wide quantity of initiatives (energy or housing cooperatives, organic food purchasing groups, etc.), in different sectors, legal forms (cooperatives, community-based associations, social enterprises, informal groups or movements, etc.) and forms of organization (more democratic or centralized)

(Seyfang and Smith, 2007)

4. Building a theoretical framework

Learning



Social learning



Informal learning in social action

Refers to (Reed et al., 2010):

- **Mode** of learning: In social interaction in social networks, through information transmission or communicative action. Power and conditions of communication and negotiation play a key role.

- **Unity** of learning:

- Individual learning
- **Collective learning** → collective both as an unit or as the environment for individual learning

- **Levels** of learning (Mezirow, 1995):

- **Single loop**: instrumental learning, skills, operational knowledge
- **Double loop**: framings, political perspectives
- **Triple loop**: values, norms, ideology

- Emphasis in **informal learning** → emergent, complex (Foley, 1999)
- **Social movements**, where alternative hegemonies are built, as **privileged spaces for emancipatory learning** (Scandrett, 2012)
- Connections among learning, interaction, ideologies, and **political economic issues** (Foley, 1999)

Development



Human development

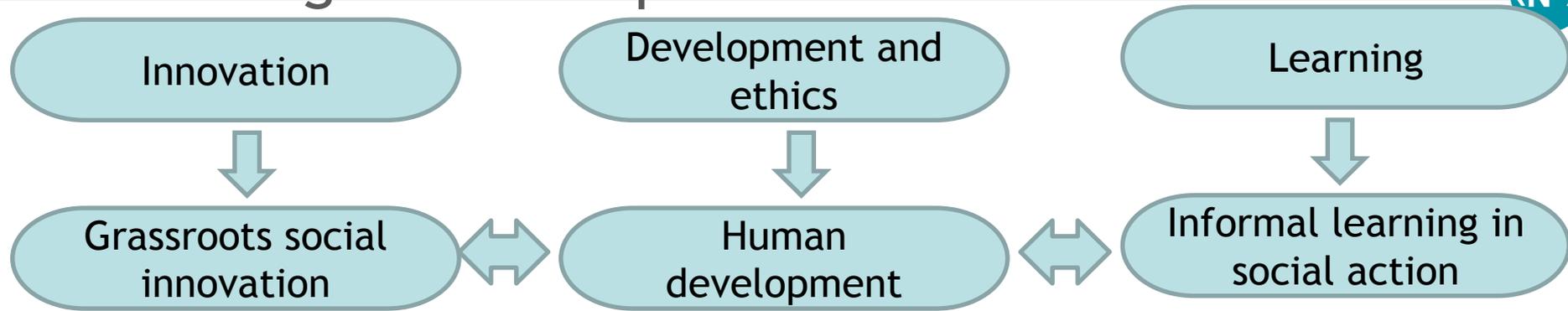
Normative perspective:

-Human development as the process of **expansion of real choices people have**, to achieve the kind of life they have reasons to value (Sen, 1990)

-Departs from the inner dignity of every human being, and **values the different interpretations, values and world visions** people have. However, human development also implies a certain **normative proposal**.
Development model based on (Ul Haq, 1995):

- Equity and diversity
- Productivity: guaranteeing livelihoods.
- Sustainability
- Empowerment

5. Refining research questions



We can connect these ideas to:

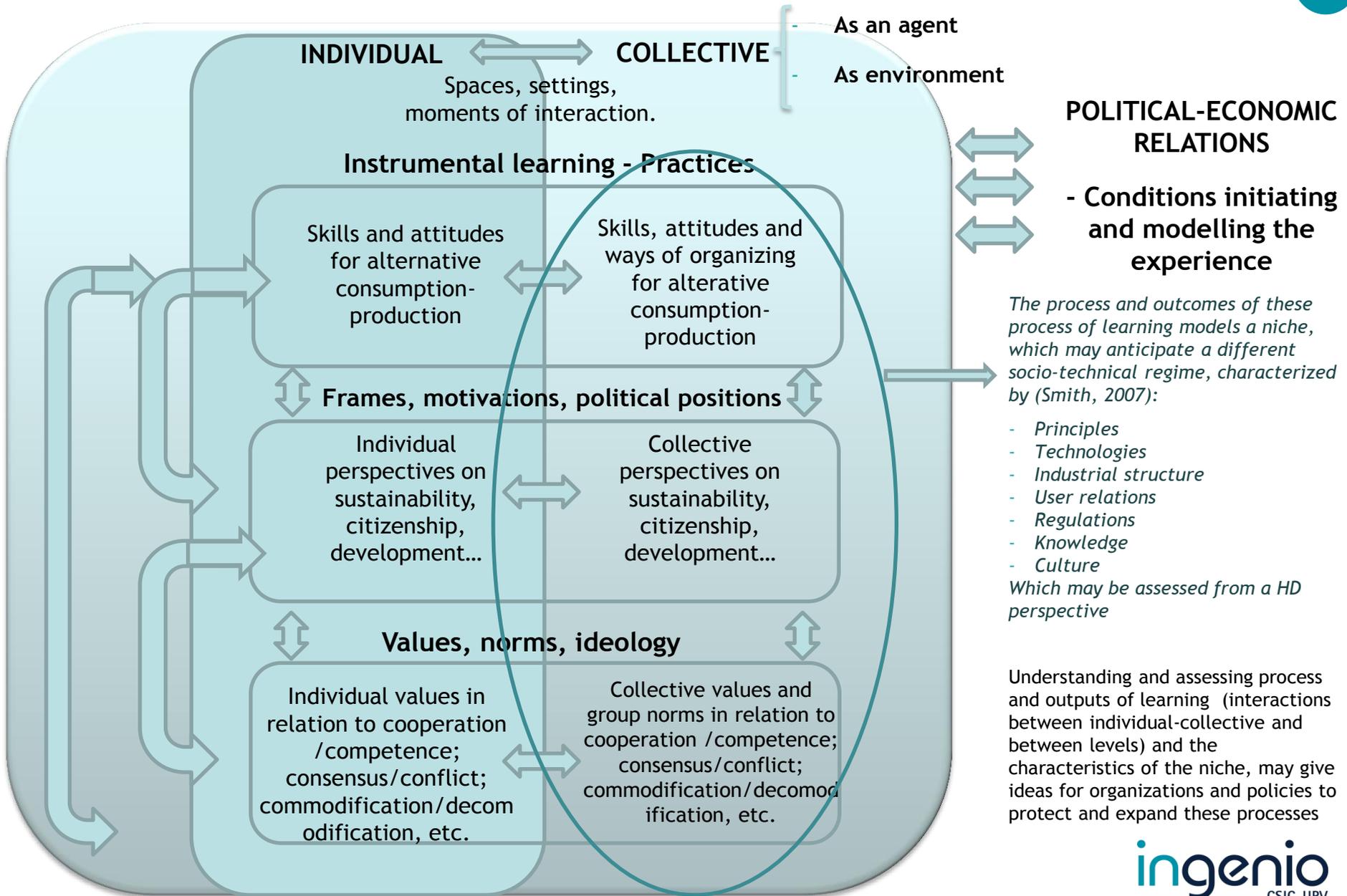
Refine the gaps we are addressing with our research:

- Value and understand grassroots as sites of innovation for transformation
- Value and understand grassroots as sites of informal learning for transformation
- Evaluate transformation from a human development approach
 - > grassroots as a site of innovation for transformation though learning processes.

Refine the aims of our research:

- To analyze what and how emerge in informal learning process in alternative provision systems built at the grassroots level, in terms of new tools, organizational settings, frames and values, coherent with human development principles, relevant for a transformative response to climate change.
- To propose recommendations to policy-makers to protect and promote these experiences.

6. Proposing an analytical framework



7. Case studies

Drawing on this framework, empirical work will be done from the end of 2015.

Alternative provision systems built at the grassroots level, in different systems.

- Agro-food system → organic food purchasing groups and organic producers
- Financial system → Savings cooperatives
- Energy system → sustainable energy cooperative -mainly distribution, but also production-
- Environmental management → Community management of irrigation systems.
- Technological system → Open source hardware technology production

Exploratory aims

Qualitative approach.

10. Challenges

Theoretical → A big number of fields and approaches: complexity, unexplored connections, potential contradictions,

Methodological → To capture transformations in individuals and organizations. Synchronic observation?

«Practical» → Conflicting agendas: Relevancy for organizations, academic agenda, requirements of donors...

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